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ABSTRACT

This study involved the use of group process techniques in meetings at which parents and teachers were encouraged to express their feelings, frustrations, needs and expectations. The two hypotheses tested were: (1) parents participating in the encounters will evidence more direct concern for their children's preschool education and more favorable attitudes toward Head Start than those not attending such meetings; and (2) that the children of parents participating will score higher on tests of language performance and information acquisition than children of parents not attending. The study included two Head Start classes involving 30 black, Mexican-American, and Anglo children. The children were pretested and posttested with the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Caldwell Preschool Inventory and Situational Test of Competence (mid-measure). Parents were tested with Parents Expectations for Achievement of children in Head Start (PEACH), Parents Attitudes Toward Head Start (PATHS), and the "How I Feel" measure of alienation. Demographic data was also collected and parents and teachers completed the Situation Test of Competence as they expected the child to respond. Results of the study showed that only the second hypothesis tested was supported. (Author/AJ)

INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARENTS-AS-TEACHERS

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INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARENTS-AS-TEACHERS[1]

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From its very inception, the Head Start program has maintained that parent participation must be an integral ingredient in successful intervention with preschool disadvantaged children. Not only are parents to be given job opportunities to advance their vocational skills, but they must become actively involved as educational agents with their own children.

While the emphasis on the educational role of the parent now comes as somewhat of an innovation, in actuality it is but a return to a relationship which prevails in many animal species and in primitive cultures. Historically, the purveyor of sex-appropriate skills, knowledge, and traditions has customarily been the parent or parent substitute of the same sex as the child being taught. With increased urbanization and the institutionalization of education under school systems, the authority of the parent-as-teacher has dwindled away. This is particularly true in poverty families, where disintegration of familial relationships is more apt to occur than in the affluent home. Although no longer the sole source of the child's knowledge of his cultural heritage, the middle class parent still maintains the role of teacher, though in many cases this function may be carried out in the form of what Strodtbeck (1964) has called a "hidden curriculum."

The important differences in teaching styles of mothers from different socioeconomic levels have been carefully studied, and the many-faceted impacts of these differences are well documented. Baldwin (1969), Baldwin (1970), Baldwin & Frank (1969), Brophy (1969), Brophy, Hess, & Shipman (1966), Datta & Parloff (1967), Heinicke (1968), Hess (1968), Hess (1969), Hess & Shipman (1965, 1967, & 1968), Kagan (1969), Ortar & Carmon (1969), Sigel, Fheher, & Olmsted (1968), Swift (1968), Tulkin & Kagan (1970), and Williams (1968) are but a few of the many references which may be cited supporting the position that there are indeed serious differences in the styles with which mothers interact cognitively with their children. The work of Hess & Shipman is of course basic in this area. Longitudinal data from a study begun in 1962 are now available, relating many facets of maternal cognitive styles and children's achievement in school. There seems little room for doubt that maternal behavior and the physical environment of the home do influence the child's early cognitive and academic development. Baldwin & Frank (1969) found more syntactic complexity in their group of Washington Square mothers, compared to Harlem mothers. Gordon (1970) reported a significant relationship between language ability and ethnicity and socioeconomic status; she concluded that programs to alleviate poverty and to teach mothers how to teach their children were both of vital importance in eliminating the linguistic disadvantage of poverty children.

[1]Of the many staff members who made important contributions, special thanks should go to Aileen Gaal, Marta Steiner, and Daniel Beccera. Also, the parents, teachers, aides, group leaders, and delegate agency personnel should be specially commended for their cooperation.

In particular, the language of the mother seems to be a critical variable. Using an entirely different ethnic sample, Ortar & Carmon's 1969 investigation of the interdependence between quality of the mother's speech, her socio-cultural background, and her children's level of intelligence was highly supportive of findings in similar studies with poverty children in this country. While Tulkin & Kagan (1970) found little social class difference in mothers' nonverbal behavior, there were dramatic differences in a variety of verbal behaviors. These authors also commented on differences in value systems, and noted that working class mothers seemed to lack confidence in their ability to influence the development of their children. Kagan (1969) pointed out that in order to maximize the potential development of their children it would be important to teach lower class mothers to become effective change agents in their children's lives.

Hunt (1971) presents convincing evidence of the interrelationship between intelligence and experience, pointing out that differences in child rearing practices across various cultures have produced a wide range in measured I.Q. He also cites numerous studies which point up the many areas, nutrition, health, language, cognitive development, in which children of the poor, irrespective of race, suffer deficits associated with their impoverished environment. Again the advocacy is for parent education programs, in this case, the Parent Child Centers.

Many experiments have demonstrated the effectiveness of interventions involving a parent education component. Conceding that attempts of psychologists and social workers to improve the child-rearing practices of poverty mothers through workshops, lectures, or counseling have usually failed to improve either mothers or children, Hunt reports several interventions which do show promise in both areas. The work of Gray, Klaus Miller, & Forrester (1966), Karnes, Studley, Wright, & Hodgins (1968), and Badger (1968) are discussed at length. Hunt's listing is far from exhaustive. There are many others, for example, Adkins & Herman (1968, 1970), Barbrack (1970), Barbrack & Horton (1970), Boger & Beery (1970), Boger, Kuipers, & Beery (1969), Brazziel & Terrell (1963), Bushell & Jacobson (1968), Hartman (1965), Hayes & Dembo (1970), Jacobs & Pierce-Jones (1969), Kamii & Radin (1967), McCarthy (1968), McInerney (1967), Meier (1970), O'Piela (1968), Orhan (1968), Weikart & Lambie (1967), and Wohlford (1968), all have carried out studies which demonstrate the value of teaching parents to teach their children. In Florida, the Gordon Parent Education Model has been adopted for Follow Through and is being widely implemented. (Cf. Gordon, 1969, 1970; Gordon & Guinagh, 1969; and Jester, 1969).

At UCLA, the Early Childhood Research Center has carried out a series of experiments to test the hypothesis that one way to help children become more ready to cope with school tasks is to provide parents with materials and techniques so that they will become more effective teachers of their own children. A brief pilot test (Stern, 1967) of the materials and procedures developed at the UCLA-ECRC produced sufficiently encouraging results to warrant a more extended investigation. In the second study (Stern, Gaal, Goetz, Davis, & Kitano, 1968), three methods of working with parents were compared with Head Start populations. For one group of children, the teacher presented the instructional materials to the

parents in meetings at school, and taught them to use these materials at home; they also used the same materials in the classroom. The second and third groups used these materials either at home or at school; the fourth group had the regular Head Start program without any intervention.

The effects of the intervention, which lasted less than three months, demonstrated significant improvement in language ability when the parents used the materials at home. In addition, there was a trend toward decrease in alienation on the part of the parents. The group in which the teacher implemented the materials showed no comparable change.

A basic premise of this study had been that the classroom teacher should be the one to work with the parents, to increase their ability to reinforce and stimulate motivation for school achievement in their children. However, there was a wide disparity in the facility with which the individual teachers carried out this assignment. Although they all seemed to be equally enthusiastic about the project, only one of the four teachers actually followed the guidelines set down for the experimental procedure or made any effort to maintain attendance at the weekly parent meetings.

Other lines of research at UCLA-ECRC had indicated that many of the teachers of preschool children did not place the same value on acquisition of academic skills as did the parents of these children, or the teachers in the elementary grades. In other words, there seemed to be a considerable lack of consensus among preschool teachers, elementary school teachers, and parents as to what were the major priorities in the education of these children. To explore this question further, the next study (Stern, Kitano, Gaal, Goetz, & Ruble, 1970) was designed to determine what competencies, characteristics, and qualities parents and teachers value and wish to inculcate in young children, and to test whether group discussions would produce a greater degree of understanding, with a lessening in alienation on the part of the parents and in the discrepancy between the goals of preschool and kindergarten teachers.

In the initial meetings with the teachers it became evident that there was a great resistance, especially on the part of the kindergarten teachers, to including the parents in the group meetings. It was therefore decided to have separate parent and teacher meetings, with the hope that after a while the two groups would want to meet together. Unfortunately, by the time the teachers were ready to accept the parents as participants in their deliberations, most of the parents had stopped coming and their interest in the meetings could not be revived.

Even as the attendance of the parents diminished, the involvement of the teachers increased over the intervention period. In the course of the communication between the preschool and kindergarten groups the anticipated discrepancy in goals seemed to be largely semantic. All teachers valued the emphasis on the development of the individual child, but the kindergarten teachers insisted that this was impossible under their overworked conditions, double sessions, and administrative restrictions.

Parenthetically, it should be noted that the question of goal discrepancy between the educational establishment and the community has also been the subject of extensive investigation by other researchers. Wilder (1968) at the Columbia University Bureau of Applied Research has published a two-volume report which treats with the goals of education as perceived by mothers, teachers, and students, and relates many of the problems of role strain, alienation, and deviant behavior among high school students to the serious lack of correspondence in this critical area. Also, the parent interview used in the national evaluation of Head Start has provided data for many studies which discuss parental aspirations and expectations for the educational future of their children. (Cf. Hervey, 1968, and Rodman & Voydanoff, 1969)

There was one major area of disagreement between the two teacher groups in the parent-teacher study (Stern et al.,1970). Throughout their meetings, there was never much eagerness to get involved with parents, especially on the part of the kindergarten group While admitting the potential value of parents as classroom aides, these teachers did not feel that they had either the time or the skills necessary to assume the task of training parents to assume a paraprofessional role.

The problems involved in the training of parents have been discussed in many of the studies previously cited. In addition, the question of parent education has been the major focus in many other research efforts. The Child Study Association of America has carried out a curriculum training program for parent participation in Head Start (1967) and has also issued a report on its three-year project for training social workers in parent group leadership (1965). Auerbach (1968), De Franco (1968), Moore & Stout (1968), Roberts (1966), Smith (1968), and Walder (1968) have contributed a variety of meaningful insights into procedures for improving the quality of parental communication with their children. However, supporting the position of Hunt (1971), Shaw & Rector (1968) note that there may be little correspondence between the parents' enjoyment of the group experience and the benefits they gain from it in terms of their ability to improve the educational competence of their children.

Research in parent participation seems to be demonstrating the same type of findings which have been repeatedly supported in studies comparing various preschool curricular approaches. In essence, while most types of preschool programs have some degree of impact on children, those which are most structured, with clearly stated objectives, produce the greatest measurable gains in the acquisition of academic skills Similarly, where parent programs provide specific training in instructional techniques for the utilization of materials and events to foster cognitive development, children have been shown to improve significantly in these areas. In addition, many parents from environments with a history of generations of unemployment have become motivated to enter meaningful careers within the field of early education

However, for the beneficial effects of parent education to occur, there must be active involvement in and parental support for the program.

For many reasons it has been extremely difficult to obtain the full parent participation upon which Head Start has been predicated. The study reported here was still another attempt by the UCLA-ECRC to investigate procedures for enlisting parental involvement in education programs aimed at maximizing their effectiveness as educational agents. The design of the study involved the use of group process techniques in meetings at which parents and teachers would be encouraged to express their feelings and frustrations as well as their needs and expectations. As a result of this interaction, it was hoped that the parents would become more aware of their own capabilities and take increased responsibility for providing educational experiences for their children.

Two hypotheses were tested:

1. Parents who participate in parent-teacher encounters will evidence more direct concern for their children's preschool education and more favorable attitudes toward Head Start in general than parents of children in Head Start who do not attend such meetings;

2. Children of parents who participate in these parent-teacher groups will score significantly higher on tests of language performance and information acquisition than children whose parents do not participate.

Method

Subjects

The entire population of four Head Start classes in the Los Angeles area were involved in the study, using a replication design. The first comparison consisted of two classes at the same site; the second comparison was comprised of two classes, each at a separate site. Unfortunately, the ethnic composition of the two populations differed considerably. At the first site there were 25 Black children, four Mexican-American, and one Anglo; in the other two classes there were 16 Mexican-American children, many of whose parents could speak but little English, and only four Black and four Anglo children.

Although the two experimental and control classes were originally intended to provide at least the minimum number of replicates required for testing treatment effects with intact classes, it soon became apparent that the two sets of contrasted classes consisted of linguistically-different populations. Because of this basic difference, initiation of treatment with the two experimental classes diverged from the very outset. Each of the paired classes is therefore discussed separately in this report. Replication #1 represents the experimental class at the site where the parent meetings were implemented; Replication #2 identifies the experimental class at which all efforts to establish a parent group were unavailing, and the meetings were discontinued. Control 1 and Control 2 represent the corresponding control class for each replication.

Criterion Measures

All the children were pretested, using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test as a measure of intellectual ability and the Caldwell Preschool Inventory as an index of information acquisition. In addition, all the children were given the Situational Test of Competence (STC), an experimental measure intended to get at the child's sense of his own competence in a variety of social and problem solving situations.

With the parents, several interview protocols and attitude inventories were used. In a home visit, a community aide obtained demographic information which was entered on the UCLA-ECRC Biodata Form. Parents were also asked to fill in the "How I Feel" scale, a measure of alienation; the Parent Attitudes Toward Head Start (PATHS); and the Parents Expectations for Achievement of Children in Head Start (PEACH). The responses on these instruments were used as the basis for initiating discussion and planning activities for the group meetings.

Posttesting was carried out only at the first comparison site, where the treatment had been implemented. It was felt that since the treatment had been discontinued after the six poorly-attended meetings, it would be pointless to expect to find any differences between the second pair of experimental and control classes; if differences were found, these could obviously not be attributed to the particular intervention variable being investigated.

No personal data on the teachers, nor information about teaching styles or classroom activities, were collected. However, the teachers were asked to select the two children in their classes who, in their opinion, had the strongest positive and negative feelings about themselves, and to fill in the STC as they would expect each child to respond; parents were also asked to indicate how they thought their children would see themselves in the various situations portrayed on the test.

Procedure

The first three months of the study were spent in discussions with delegate agency representatives, selection of sites, hiring of personnel and development of instrumentation. Community representatives were engaged to visit parents and arrange for them to attend the group meetings. These aides also assisted in obtaining responses to the various instruments used with the parents. Research assistants from the ECRC staff administered the tests to the children in all four classes.

Replication #1. On the recommendation of the Delegate Agency Head Start Coordinator, the agency social worker was employed as the group leader. The first meeting was attended by the teacher of the experimental class, the group leader, the project supervisor from the UCLA-ECRC staff, and a social work aide; nine of the 15 families were represented. At this initial session, the primary objective was to convince the parents that these meetings were to reflect their own interests and concerns about the education of their children. However, few of the parents were willing to

speak up, and those who did made only favorable comments about Head Start. They were unwilling to express any criticism of the curriculum and did not feel that their opinions should be solicited in this area since they felt incapable of making any direct contribution to the education of their own children either at school or at home. As the parents began to feel more at ease, they became willing to talk about their feelings, and items from the alienation scale were used as springboards into sensitive areas. For instance, one meeting was devoted to a discussion of conflicts between partners in an inter-racial marriage, and the emotional problems faced by the child of such a marriage. (Cf. Bell, 1967.)

Topics covered in the first three meetings were primarily concerned with affective relationships, including questions of discipline, appropriate ways of handling anger, boundaries between love and over-protection, children's attitudes about themselves, their color, sex, and ability to cope with peers and school experiences. (See Appendix A for list of topics.)

One of the items on the PATHS asked whether Head Start teachers sent materials home for parents to use with their children; most of the replies indicated that this was not being done but that it should be. Coupling this with responses to items on the PEACH, which indicated a high priority placed on the learning of academic skills, the non-directive "counseling" approach was dropped in favor of more structured meetings. With the fourth session, the project supervisor began to introduce some of the materials which had been developed by the ECRC as part of the Preschool Language Project (Stern, 1967). These consisted of booklets containing language modeling stories, math concepts, etc. Since the parents had been encouraged to bring their children to the meetings, it was possible to demonstrate the use of the materials and involve the parents directly in the teaching role. The actual teaching episodes provided the basis for the presentation of instructional techniques such as cueing, asking leading questions, and supplying informational feed-back as well as praise and encouragement. In addition, parents were encouraged to discuss how the weekly lessons could be extended and enlarged upon at home. In these interactions parents were often able to devise exciting ways to utilize commonplace objects to reinforce lessons on shapes, numbers, letters, etc.

By the 10th meeting, parent enthusiasm for the program had developed to the point that they were eager to have the meetings continue beyond the scheduled termination date for the research study. Fortunately, in the same neighborhood there was another program with a very similar objective. This project, More Opportunities Via Education (MOVE) was concerned with establishing groups of parents interested in fostering their children's education. A representative from this group was invited to attend the last meeting and several of the parents of the experimental group subsequently became involved with Project MOVE.

Replication #2. After the pretesting, when it was learned that the majority of the families in the second experimental class were non-English speakers, an attempt was made to find a bilingual group leader instead of

the one originally assigned who spoke only English. A Mexican-American sociologist agreed to take on the role of group leader, but requested that a friend of his, who was an experienced Head Start administrator and community leader, share the responsibility.

It was the opinion of these two professional Chicano community organizers that the parents would be very hesitant to express their true feelings about the Head Start teacher or curriculum in front of the Anglo teacher. Instead, it was suggested that the social work aide, who had a good rapport with the families at the site, should attend. Because of the delay due to staffing problems, the first meeting did not take place until the middle of the fifth month. In spite of this late start, there was still sufficient time to have the 12 meetings called for in the study. However, two events occurred at this first meeting which ultimately resulted in the decision to abandon the replication.

Unknown to any of the project staff, one of the most active and vocal of the mothers present was very much disliked by the other parents. When she began taking a dominant role, attempting to coerce the attendance of the other parents, she succeeded in alienating several who had attended the first meeting. Even more disastrous was the tack taken by the group leaders. Although the project supervisor had spent several hours explaining that the purpose of these meetings was to help parents develop their skills as educational agents with their children, the group leader used the meeting as a forum to instigate political involvement in community decision-making processes. The third meeting was a fiasco. Since only the officious parent and her sycophant appeared, there were three times as many project staff as parents.

At this point it was clear that drastic measures would have to be taken. In spite of the fact that no bilingual group leaders could be found to replace the original ones, the services of these two professionals were terminated. An ECRC staff member, with a Chicano university student as translator, attempted to bring the meetings back to their original educational objective. Excluding the teacher had obviously been an error, since the parents definitely wanted to be able to discuss behavior problems and other relevant questions with her. Thus the first important change in tactics was to invite the teacher to the meetings. Also, the parents of the children in the experimental class were visited by the new group leader and the Spanish-speaking student and advised of the change in program focus. Discussions of behavior problems, curriculum, and the learning process would be more relevant in a direct confrontation of parents and teacher. Also there was some basis to believe that the teacher, serving as a strong authority figure, would provide increased incentive for attending the meetings.

To maximize the comparability of the two experimental classes, the same educational materials, stories, and concept exercises were translated into Spanish and presented to the children at the meetings. Similarly, the parents were invited to participate in these instructional episodes, and to contribute their own ideas for elaborating and expanding the concepts through the utilization of commonplace materials. Because

there were so few parents at the fourth meeting, the staff members visited the families who had not been present, demonstrated the use of the materials and urged attendance at the next meeting.

Under these new conditions the project continued for a fifth and sixth meeting. However, parent involvement continued to be uncertain and sporadic, and the group never really coalesced. Although each week's new approach succeeded in increasing attendance at the next meeting, the letters, phone calls, and home visits began to seem oppressive to the parents. In the light of the continued limited parent response, the meetings were discontinued. No posttesting was carried out, either with parents or children.

Results

The demographic description of the total population is presented in Table 1. Even though a Spanish-speaking community representative was employed to visit the homes and fill in the data on the various protocols, it was impossible to obtain the cooperation of three of the Mexican-American parents and hence the data on only nine families are included for the experimental class in Replication #2. As indicated earlier, the major difference between the two pairs of classes was in terms of ethnicity.

The pretest scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test for the first experimental and control classes (Table 2) indicate that these two groups were basically from the same population. This was also true of the second control class where the mean I.Q. was 87.0, S.D. 16.4, N=13; the mean for the second experimental class, including all 14 children was 57.9, S.D. 32.3. However, six of the children had been reported as having very little facility with the English language. When their scores were excluded from the calculations the mean I.Q. for the second experimental class was 81.5, S.D. 19.7. All the pretest PPVT scores are thus very similar to those found with other groups of English-speaking Head Start children in this area.

For Replication #1, although there were no reliable differences between the experimental and control classes on the posttest (Table 3), the experimental group showed reliable pre-post gains ($t=2.73$, $p<.05$) whereas the control group did not ($t=0.90$). A dependent t-test on the gain scores for the experimental group was 9.62, $p<.001$, and for the control group 1.82, $p<.05$. The significance of the difference in gains between the two groups was $t=3.06$, $p<.01$.

The second measure with which all the children were pretested was the Caldwell Preschool Inventory. Here significant differences were found between the experimental and control classes in the first replication (Table 3). This test was administered by the classroom teacher, a procedure widely followed with this instrument. While this does not usually create major problems, the teacher of the control

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF POPULATION

	Experimental				Control			
	1 (N=15)		2 (N=12)		1 (N=15)		2 (N=12)	
Respondent	#1	#2	#1	#2	#1	#2	#1	#2
Parent	14	5	9	8	11	9	12	5
Grandparent	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Aunt, Uncle	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
Other	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
No Response	0	7	3	4	0	3	0	7
Race								
Anglo	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	2
Negro	12	6	2	1	13	10	2	0
Mexican-American	2	2	7	7	2	2	6	3
No Response	0	7	3	4	0	3	0	7
Sex								
Male	1	6	1	7	3	7	0	0
Female	14	2	8	1	12	5	12	5
No Response	0	7	3	4	0	3	0	7
Age Group								
20-29	8	2	2	0	5	3	9	3
30-39	3	3	4	3	8	6	2	2
40-49	3	2	2	4	0	1	1	0
Over 49	1	1	0	0	2	2	0	0
No Response	0	7	4	5	0	3	0	7
Highest Grade Completed								
Did Not Finish Grade School	1	4	0	0	4	4	0	0
Did Not Finish High School	4	1	1	0	2	2	2	3
High School Graduate	8	2	2	1	7	4	7	1
College	2	1	0	1	2	2	1	0
No Response	0	7	9	10	0	3	2	8
Language Spoken								
Standard English	14	7	4	3	14	11	10	4
Mexican Spanish	1	0	1	1	1	0	2	0
Cuban or Puerto Rican Spanish	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
Bilingual	0	1	2	2	0	1	0	1
No Response	0	7	3	4	0	3	0	7
Socioeconomic Level								
Middle	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	2
Low	14	8	9	7	14	11	12	3
No Response	0	7	3	4	0	3	0	7

TABLE 1 (CONT.)

	Experimental		Control	
	1 (N=15)	2 (N=12)	1 (N=15)	2 (N=12)
Children with Preschool Experience				
1	11	7	6	8
2-3	3	2	9	4
4-5	1	0	0	0
Children with Head Start Experience				
0	1	0	0	0
1-2	13	9	10	11
3-4	1	0	5	1
Children with Day Care Experience				
0	11	9	13	12
1-2	4	0	2	0
Children with Private Nursery Experience				
0	15	9	15	12
Children with No Preschool Experience				
0	5	0	5	1
1-2	8	6	1	8
3-4	2	0	4	3
5-6	0	3	4	0
7-8	0	0	1	0
Older Children in Family				
0	9	2	3	4
1-2	2	4	4	6
3-4	3	1	2	2
5-6	0	2	6	0
7	1	0	0	0
Younger Children in Family				
0	8	5	10	3
1-2	7	4	5	9
Residence in Neighborhood				
Under 1 year	2	2	1	0
1 year to 3 years	4	0	3	1
3 years to 5 years	3	3	3	1
5 years to 7 years	2	0	4	3
7 years to 10 years	1	1	0	2
Over 10 years	3	2	3	0
No Response	0	1	1	5

TABLE 1 (CONT.)

	Experimental		Control	
	1 (N=15)	2 (N=12)	1 (N=15)	2 (N=12)
Language of Interview				
Standard English	14	4	15	10
Mexican Spanish	1	5	0	1
Bilingual	0	0	0	1
In Joint Interview, Who Answered Most Questions				
Father	2	1	3	1
Mother	6	7	5	7
No Response	7	1	7	4
Sex of Examiner				
Male	7	9	6	10
Female	8	0	9	2
Race of Examiner				
Anglo	5	0	4	2
Negro	3	0	5	0
Mexican-American (Bilingual)	7	9	6	10
Race of Child in Study				
Anglo	1	0	0	4
Negro	12	2	13	2
Mexican-American	2	7	2	6
Sex of Child in Study				
Male	8	3	7	5
Female	7	6	8	7
Age of Child in Study				
4 years	13	8	11	10
5 years	2	1	4	2

TABLE 2

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR MAJOR VARIABLES
FOR EXPERIMENTAL (N=15) AND CONTROL (N=15) GROUPS

	Experimental		Control	
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.
1. Pretest I.Q. (PPVT)	84.5	15.3	86.6	12.8
2. Posttest I.Q. (PPVT)	98.9	13.5	91.5	16.8
3. Pretest Caldwell	36.5	10.2	42.2	8.0
4. Posttest Caldwell	45.3	9.3	36.8	8.0
5. Self-Concept Test (Child Responses)	26.4	3.6	25.2	3.8
6. Self-Concept Test (Parent Responses)	28.5	4.3	30.9	4.1
7. Self-Concept Test (Teacher Responses)	25.8	7.3	31.3	4.4
8. Self-Concept Test (Teacher Ratings)	1.5	0.6	1.5	0.6
9. # of Days Attended	116.7	7.3	105.6	20.2
10. Parent Visits to Site	42.7	15.0	10.6	6.1
11. Parent-Teacher Conferences	1.4	0.6	0.9	0.5
12. Father + Mother at Meetings	9.5	8.1	—	—

TABLE 3

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE ON PPVT AND CALDWELL MEAN SCORES
FOR EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS
(PRETEST SCORE AS COVARIATE)

Measure	Source	df	M.S.	F
PPVT	Treatment	1	547.8	3.27
	Error	28	167.5	
Caldwell	Treatment	1	928.1	18.62**
	Error	28	49.8	

*p<.05; **p<.01.

class evidently felt highly ego-involved in the performance of the children and undoubtedly cued the children so that they attained unrealistically inflated scores. As a consequence, on the posttest, which was administered by the regular research staff of the Center, these children's scores were considerably below those they had obtained on the pretest. Since their posttest scores were also below those of the experimental group, the difference between the two groups was undoubtedly exaggerated. However, on the post scores alone, the t-test value of 2.93 indicates a significant difference at the .01 level.

The average Caldwell pretest scores for the second experimental and control classes were 26.5, S.D. 8.6 and 25.6, S.D. 12.8, respectively, which was considerably below the performance of the children in the first replication. It should be noted that here all the Caldwell tests were administered by the staff of the Center, who were professionally trained testers, while those at the first replication were given by the teachers. Also, it must be remembered that many of the children in the second experiment did not have English as a first language.

The third test used with all the children was the Situational Test of Competence. Since the development of this test is still in an experimental stage, no normative scores were available. However, the mean raw scores of the second experimental and control groups (26.1, S.D. 4.5 and 27.3, S.D. 5.5, respectively) are consistent with those obtained by the first experimental and control classes (see Table 2).

To test whether teacher ratings would be a meaningful basis for validating the Situational Test of Competence, all teachers were asked to select two children (one boy and one girl) whom they believe to have the strongest positive feelings of competence and self worth, and the two who in their opinion felt least adequate. They were then asked to mark the test booklets as they expected the children would respond to the various items. Ideally, the teacher should have been asked to rate and fill out a booklet for each child in her class. However, it was felt that this would involve too much paperwork, which teachers find highly onerous. Thus, in the intercorrelation matrix (Table 4) all correlations with teacher ratings and teacher responses (variables 7 and 8) involve only four pairs of comparisons.

The attendance records for both children and parents were used as indirect measures of the effect of the intervention. These data are also presented in Table 2. Because of the wide variation in the attendance of the children in the control group, the difference between the two groups is just below significance ($t=2.00$ where 2.13 would be at the .05 level). Certainly there is a difference in the variability of attendance of the two groups: 7.3 vs. 20.2 indicating that the children in the experimental treatment, as a group, attended class far more consistently than those in the control.

With reference to parent participation, those in the experimental group had significantly more parent-teacher conferences ($t=2.50$, $p<.05$); as well as paying many more visits to the class ($t=7.64$, $p<.001$). In

TABLE 4

INTERCORRELATION MATRIX ON MAJOR VARIABLES
FOR EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS

	Variables	Experimental 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	Pretest I.Q. (PPVT)		30	42	37	-23	27	47	52	28	59*	15
2.	Posttest I.Q. (PPVT)	82**		33	28	-20	66**	77	96*	-13	52*	-02
3.	Pretest Caldwell	11	38		69**	-06	26	93	72	31	05	15
4.	Posttest Caldwell	-25	-17	47		-07	37	21	35	16	-05	34
5.	Self-Concept Test (Child Responses)	43	38	00	-34		-39	-01	20	-39	01	-26
6.	Self-Concept Test (Parent Responses)	28	33	47	35	13		64	84	-29	46	09
7.	Self-Concept Test (Teacher Responses)	-09	49	97*	43	-81	-78		91	-79	39	-52
8.	Self-Concept Test (Teacher Ratings)	-29	35	100**	41	-77	-81	98*		-84	62	-13
9.	# of Days Attended	07	00	-35	-13	20	-06	13	31		-27	07
10.	Parent Visits to Site	51	73	54	07	32	37	83	71	24		11
11.	Parent-Teacher Conferences	-06	-07	-21	05	-04	28	-94	-84	39	42	
		Control										

*p<.05; **p<.01.

spite of the treatment differences, the intercorrelation of the three attendance variables with other measures do not demonstrate any consistent or meaningful patterns. However, the intercorrelation matrix does present some interesting findings with reference to the self-competence test. There was a significant positive correlation between the child's performance on the PPVT and the teacher's rating of his self-competence. In the experimental group, the child's own evaluation of himself showed a negative correlation with both the Caldwell and the PPVT, whereas in the control group this relationship was low positive for the PPVT and low negative for the Caldwell. This seems to indicate that children who actually do well on the intelligence measure do not necessarily have a strong sense of self esteem or competence; on the contrary, there is more support for the hypothesis that the brighter children have less security about their own competence and ability to cope in either social or problem solving situations.

It is also of interest that while for the experimental group there is a strong positive relationship between the parent's and the teacher's opinion as to how a particular child views himself, the opposite is true for the control group where there is an equally strong negative correlation for these variables. Evidently the group meetings brought the participating parents and teachers closer together in their attitudes toward the children. Although further investigation is needed before any definitive statements can be made about what this instrument is measuring, on the whole it seems to indicate that either teacher and parent judgment of children's innermost feelings about themselves are highly suspect, or that even four-year-old children have already "psyched out" what adults value and have learned to present a façade to disguise their true feelings. In other words, it is quite possible that the parents and teachers really do know the child, but that the child doesn't know himself or is unwilling to present the truth about himself.

With only four pairs for the teacher responses and teacher ratings, correlations of .95 and .99 are required for significance at the .05 and .01 levels, respectively. Although only two correlations reached significance by these criteria, it is interesting to note the treatment differences in the correlations between parent responses (variable 6), teacher ratings (variable 7), and teacher responses (variable 8) with parent visits to site (variable 10). For the experimental group, all these correlations are moderately positive; while the control group also has a moderately positive correlation between variables 6 and 10, there is a high negative correlation, approaching significance, between both 7 and 10, and 8 and 10. For parent-teacher conferences (variable 11) the same relationships are found with the control group, but the experimental group shows negative correlations of 6 and 8 with 11 and no correlations of 7 with 11. These discrepancies are difficult to interpret, especially since there are significant treatment differences on the means for both variables.

Three major instruments were administered to the parents: the PEACH (Parent Expectations for Achievement of Children in Head Start), the PATHS (Parent Attitudes Towards Head Start), and How I Feel, a

measure of alienation. Scores on the PEACH for the total population of parents are presented in Table 5. The subscales on this test include items related to: 1) motor skills, 2) self-concept; 3) creativity, 4) maturity, 5) socialization, 6) information, and 7) reasoning. The ratings were based on the following scale: 1 = very unimportant. 2 = unimportant, 3 = no opinion either way (no response), 4 = important, and 5 = very important. In the past, parents and teachers have indicated that these are not all considered equally important, with parents consistently placing higher value on academic skills than on social and interpersonal development. This was not true with the present group of parents. Relatively high value was placed on all types of learnings; on the average, items in the social-emotional domain were given somewhat higher ratings (3.9 to 4.4) than those in the skill and cognitive areas (3.7 to 3.8).

While there were no significant differences across subscales, there seems to be a consistent trend indicating that black parents place higher value on all types of learnings, compared to the Mexican-American group. However, this difference reaches significance only on the information subscale, where black mothers rate informational learning considerably higher in importance than do the non-Black mothers.

Comparing the two replication groups, at the first site, where active parent participation was obtained, and where the majority of the population was Black, there also was a significantly higher degree of importance placed both on informational learning and on the development of positive self-concept. Pre-post comparisons, carried out only at the first site, showed no significant changes for either the experimental or control groups. This may very well be due to the lack of sensitivity of the instrument, since there were many other objective indications that parents in the experimental group had become more actively involved with their children's education.

Although there were generally significant positive correlations among the various subtests on the PEACH (Table 6), the correlation between the parent-teacher conferences variable and all individual subscales are consistently high-negative, reaching significance on three of the seven subscales.

The relationships with other variables are spotty and thus difficult to interpret. For the control group there were 28, and for the experimental group 35 possible correlations (four and five variables with the seven subscales, respectively). Of these there were only two significant r's for each treatment group. The control group had two positive correlations (PPVT with socialization and Caldwell with self-concept) and the experimental group had one negative (Caldwell with self-concept) and one positive correlation (Caldwell with socialization). It may very well be that these four significant (.05 level) correlations, in such a large matrix, are simple statistical artifacts.

The responses on the "How I Feel" interview support the subjective or anecdotal records. While the difference between means for the experimental and control classes, shown in Table 7, is not statistically

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF SELECTED GROUPS ON SUBSCALES OF
PARENTS EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILDREN IN HEAD START (PEACH)

		PEACH SUBSCALES						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Number of Items		9	5	6	15	11	12	12
Average Rating[a] per Item								
Pretest (N=91)		3.7	3.9	3.7	4.2	4.4	3.7	3.8
Posttest (N=30)		3.9	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.0	3.9
Pretest Comparisons								
Mothers	Mean	32.7	19.9	21.7	63.4	47.6	44.1	44.3
(N=54)	S.D.	6.8	3.6	4.8	7.1	5.1	11.1	8.6
Fathers	Mean	33.3	19.5	22.1	63.4	48.1	44.9	46.0
(N=37)	SSD.	6.9	3.6	4.9	7.2	4.4	11.5	8.9
	t-test	-0.4	0.5	-0.3	0.0	-0.5	-0.3	-0.9
Site #1	Mean	33.6	20.5	22.3	64.8	48.8	47.9	45.3
(N=43)	S.D.	6.2	3.2	4.8	6.7	4.3	8.8	8.5
Site #2	Mean	32.4	19.0	21.5	62.1	46.9	41.4	44.7
(N=48)	S.D.	7.4	3.8	4.8	7.3	5.1	12.2	9.0
	t-test	0.8	2.0*	0.8	1.8	1.9	2.9**	0.4
Black Fathers	Mean	32.9	20.1	21.2	64.3	48.1	48.4	45.6
(N=14)	S.D.	5.9	4.0	5.3	7.3	3.9	10.2	8.7
All Others	Mean	33.5	19.2	22.6	62.8	48.1	42.8	46.2
(N=23)	S.D.	7.5	3.4	4.7	7.2	4.8	12.0	9.3
	t-test	-0.3	0.7	-0.8	0.6	-0.0	1.5	-0.2
Black Mothers	Mean	33.7	20.7	21.9	65.0	49.0	47.2	45.1
(N=26)	S.D.	6.4	3.3	4.8	6.8	4.6	8.7	8.7
All Others	Mean	31.9	19.1	21.6	62.0	46.4	41.3	43.5
(N=28)	S.D.	7.2	3.7	4.8	7.3	5.3	12.4	8.5
	t-test	1.0	1.7	0.3	1.5	1.9	2.0*	0.7
Posttest Comparisons (Site #1 only)								
Control	Mean	32.3	20.5	23.5	63.6	47.2	48.1	46.6
(N=15)	S.D.	6.7	3.0	3.4	5.2	4.1	5.4	5.7
Experimental	Mean	35.2	19.8	23.1	62.9	47.4	47.9	47.7
(N=15)	S.D.	4.1	2.6	2.9	6.5	5.4	8.0	6.8
	t-test	-1.5	0.7	0.3	0.3	-0.1	0.1	-0.5

[a]Rating of 5 indicates "Very Important;" 1 indicates "Not Important."

*p<.05; **p<.01.

TABLE 6

INTERCORRELATION MATRIX FOR PEACH POSTTEST SCORES
FOR EXPERIMENTAL (N=15) AND CONTROL (N=15) GROUPS

Variables	Experimental											
	2	4	9	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
2. Posttest I.Q. (PPVT)					-01	26	20	29	05	15	-16	31
4. Posttest Caldwell					-19	21	38	-50*	26	49*	-04	-16
9. # of Days Attended (Child)					25	-13	-17	-19	-28	12	-25	-26
10. Parent Visits to Site					28	25	21	11	29	09	08	32
11. Parent-Teacher Conferences					-28	-51*	-65**	-35	-42	-60*	-24	-50*
12. Father + Mother at Meetings						25	18	38	26	39	11	29
13. PEACH Subscale 1 (Motor Skills)	28	21	-35	18	—		69**	26	71**	55*	45	77**
14. PEACH Subscale 2 (Self Concept)	-03	56*	-03	-06	—	41		22	50*	64**	29	63*
15. PEACH Subscale 3 (Creativity)	11	14	-20	-19	—	80**	60*		14	08	16	66**
16. PEACH Subscale 4 (Maturity)	15	18	03	-13	—	54*	71**	78**		65**	62**	64**
17. PEACH Subscale 5 (Socialization)	49*	03	-23	09	—	60*	58*	70**	73**		30	48*
18. PEACH Subscale 6 (Information)	-04	17	-08	07	—	79**	46	58*	75**	37		46
19. PEACH Subscale 7 (Reasoning)	15	26	-16	-19	—	71**	73**	85**	87**	74**	70**	
	Control											

*p<.05; **p<.01.

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES, MEANS, AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS ON ALIENATION SCALE[a]

Scores	Experimental			Control		
	1 (N=15)	2 (N=12)	Total	1 (N=15)	2 (N=12)	Total
4-6	4	0	4	1	2	3
7-8	1	3	4	3	1	4
9-11	4	2	6	2	4	6
12-14	2	6	8	3	3	6
15-17	0	0	0	3	2	5
18-20	4	1	5	3	0	3
Mean	11.7	11.8	11.7	11.9	10.6	11.3
S.D.	5.9	3.2	2.4	3.5	4.3	2.3

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF PARENTS WHO SCORED IN TOP AND BOTTOM 33% ON ALIENATION SCALE

Group	Alienation Score		Visits to Sites		Attendance at Meetings		Post PPVT of Children	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Low Alienation (N=5)	5.4	2.1	51.4	13.7	15.0	8.2	107.4	3.9
High Alienation (N=5)	18.6	2.9	31.6	12.9	4.4	3.9	86.2	17.4
	$t=8.20$; $p<.01$		$t=2.35$; $p<.05$		$t=2.60$; $p<.05$		$t=2.65$; $p<.05$	

[a] The scale used was an adaptation of the UCLA-ECRC Alienation Scale developed by Hansen, Kitano & Stern and called, for this study, "How I Feel." The modified scale had 30 items; high score indicates high alienation.

reliable, closer inspection of the data ed important differences between the parents who scored in the top third and those in the bottom third on this alienation scale. The detailed record revealed that there were several parents who attended very few group meetings. This difference in attendance of parents within the experimental group seemed to warrant an analysis which would relate changes in children's performance to the degree of participation and concomitant strengthened feelings of destiny-control expressed by the parents on the "How I Feel" instrument. Such an analysis seemed justified in that one can hardly speak of the effectiveness of a treatment if the patient fails to take the medicine!

Table 8 confirms that the significant differences in alienation scores are related to the number of visits to site and attendance at parent meetings. In addition, children of parents scoring low in alienation scored significantly higher on the PPVT than did the children of parents having high alienation scores.

Turning now to the second parent measure, the Parent Attitudes Towards Head Start (PATHS) is designed to get at what parents know about the program and how they feel about the teacher and the effect of the program on their children. Parents are asked to indicate whether an item is 1) true and should be true, 2) not true but should be true, or 3) not true and should not be true. Beliefs about the program include such items as: "Head Start gives me books and materials so I can teach my child at home," and "Head Start teachers ask parents to help them plan the daily program for the children." Beliefs about teachers include: "Head Start teachers are just as interested in my child as I am," and "Head Start teachers are more interested in school learning than how children behave in class."

Using a chi-square test, there were no differences in the experimental and control classes on all of these except Item #8. Whereas for the control group there was no difference on the posttest responses, which continued to indicate that the parents did not receive materials to take home, the experimental group overwhelmingly reported that they were receiving instructional materials for teaching their children. Evidently the parent group meetings, which were the experimental treatment carried out by the research center, were perceived as being an integral part of the Head Start program.

As indicated earlier, it was felt that an indirect way to measure the successfulness of the intervention would be in terms of the frequency of the parent participation in the Head Start program. Thus records of visits to sites and parent-teacher conferences were obtained for both control and experimental classes, and of attendance at group meetings for the experimental class. The first two of these so-called "unobtrusive" measures proved to be quite meaningless, since there was no way of determining what the teacher counted as a "visit" or "conference." In some cases it seemed that every time the parent came to pick up her own child was counted as a visit, and if she asked how her child was doing, that constituted a conference! Thus although the data obtained are reported, the reliability of this type of information is questionable.

Discussion

Replication #1

A review of the anecdotal records of the meetings, from orientation to the final children's graduation party, presented in Appendix B, reveals a continuous increase in parents' awareness of their children, the children's response to this new perception, and the development of individual and group feelings of self-competence.

Parental awareness of their children's behavior and of the principles of child development in general occurred as a result of discussions ranging from the learning of the alphabet to the meaning of love. The following example reflects the nature of the learning process which occurred. During the first meetings, the parents were very busy controlling their children. They constantly interfered with the children's play, claiming that there was too much noise. As discussions progressed, the parents began to realize that they were telling their children to "behave" because they wanted them to be models of deportment and thus bring honor to their family. When they had been given greater insight into the meaning and importance of creative play, they began to enjoy and respect the behavior that they had up until then labeled silly and destructive. With a lessening of parental anxiety, the children became less demanding and increasingly self-motivated in their autonomous play.

The growth in meaningful parent-child interaction was also exemplified by comments such as "Before the meetings began, the family never said a word at the dinner table. Now we talk to each other. Laurie and I are friends." It should be noted that "talking" in this context resulted not only in more harmonious family relations, but in additional learning experiences for the child.

The parents' feelings of increased individual self-competence arose largely as a result of their success in assuming the teaching role in the utilization of the educational materials. During the first meeting the parents defined what they considered to be important for their children to learn in Head Start. They were concerned that their children learn to listen, develop a sense of curiosity, learn to count, know the alphabet, increase their attention span, etc. By the end of the sessions, there was a feeling that most of these original concerns were being met. Their children had become more observant and the parents more creative in dealing with the possibilities for learning inherent in the environment.

Another type of evidence of the effectiveness of the intervention was that when the data collectors carried out their interviews, without knowing to which treatment group the parent belonged, they reported noticeable differences in the interviews. Certain parents were more anxious to discuss their children's performance and progress, as well as other problems related to child rearing practices. Invariably, these parents were in the experimental treatment.

A greater feeling of competence developed in the group as a whole as a result of the experience of sharing mutual problems and attempting to find solutions. The most dramatic example of this was the manner of handling a situation which arose at the Head Start site. After receiving no response to their repeated complaints about these unsatisfactory conditions, the parents, on their own initiative and without any outside help, wrote and circulated a petition, obtained signatures, and then submitted this petition to the head of the agency. The immediate reaction correcting the condition greatly reinforced their growing sense of power to control the educational environment for their children. This concrete demonstration of the value of group action strengthened the parents' desire to continue their meetings even after the termination of the research project.

Replication #2

The lack of adequate parent participation and consequent early termination of this replication was due to a variety of complex factors, the most significant of which was the group leader. Problems which arose under the original leaders had shown the necessity for having someone who could interpret the purposes of the study and yet be sensitive to the personal and social needs of the parents. With a non-Spanish speaker as group leader, there was the problem of carrying on a group interaction through a translator. Unavoidably, the immediacy and impact of responses were diluted and the nuances of meaning were never fully conveyed. There was also a tendency for simultaneous conversations to occur while a previous statement was being interpreted, thus fragmenting the group into several discrete discussions. It was even more unfortunate that the teacher at the site also spoke no Spanish and was thus unable to develop a close rapport with the non-English speaking parents. She was thus not at all influential in obtaining greater parent participation.

Another problem faced at this site was one which is not uncharacteristic of many sites in non-transient neighborhoods where many of the parents have had several children attending Head Start over the years. Thus, the parents knew each other rather well and had formed strong feelings (both negative and positive) towards certain members. Some of the existing hostilities were important enough to keep several of the families from attending the group meetings.

Finally, certain cultural traditions made it difficult for the women to go out at night to attend meetings without their husbands. Since most husbands either worked at night or considered the meetings to be "women's business," this also contributed to poor attendance.

All of the above offer important insights into the problems inherent in obtaining parental involvement. It must be noted however, that even with these difficulties, several group meetings did result in meaningful interactions and learning experiences for the parents and project members. The few parents who came fairly regularly began to open up and discuss

problems, which brought them closer to each other and led to a greater awareness of their children's educational and emotional needs.

Conclusion

There is no doubt but that the involvement of parents in their children's educational program at school and at home is highly critical in the child's development. However it seems to be equally clear that this is one of the most difficult fields of educational research. There are so many variables which are beyond the control of the experimenter that it takes either a very persistent or very foolish researcher to continue to work in this area. Perhaps the most rewarding finding is that parents who attend meetings do prove capable of helping their children. The big question is how to reach those parents who need it most, the alienated, the ones who feel hopeless and powerless to change their own destinies, the ones who over generations of unemployment and welfare have become either apathetic or militantly destructive. Recently, Dr. Edmund Gordon (1971), who was for several years actively involved in the national research and evaluation program for Head Start, has expressed serious doubts as to the efficacy of intervention programs under the auspices of the primarily white establishment professional. His opinion today seems to be that such programs are implicitly taking the position that the poverty parents are somewhat to blame, or are incompetent, and that this is what contributes to their inferior position in the majority culture. He now takes the position that "this focus on the training of parents and services to their children still fails to consider the possibilities for improvement that might result from actual changes in the society's maltreatment of such populations. There is no attention given to what might result from changes in the actual status and conditions of life of poor families, what might result from the simple introduction of more money and better life conditions."

This point of view is not inconsistent with that of many militant Black organizations, and now Brown or Chicano organizations, who want to exclude white professionals, particularly university-based researchers, from community programs. While this desire to provide their own solutions is certainly commendable, and Gordon points with deserved pride to the efforts of the Black Muslims and the Black Panthers, working with "some of the most disorganized and damaged segments of the black community," it would be extremely wasteful not to utilize the knowledge and skills of professionals in providing some helpful principles and guidelines for the education of parents and children. Gordon says that "more effective programs of assistance are likely to come from among the people themselves." But this will not and cannot happen spontaneously. Some method must be found to actively involve the members of the poverty community in their own rehabilitation so that the desired self-determination can be implemented.

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TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION[1]

1. Physical-Psychological Concerns
   a. Medical-dental
   b. Social agencies
   c. Psychological problems

2. Sex Education and Planned Parenthood

3. Education: Developing Interest in Learning
   a. Meaning of test scores
   b. Importance of reading
   c. Siblings and relatives involvement
   d. How to motivate
   e. Materials to use at home
   f. Problem solving
   g. Curiosity
   h. Head Start phasing into public school

4. Discrimination
   a. Housing
   b. Public schools
   c. Jobs

5. Discipline
   a. Consistency
   b. Restrictive versus permissive

6. Independence-Dependence

7. Aggression
   a. Physical
   b. Self-assertion

8. Race Relations and Black Nationalism

9. Motor Skills-Perceptual Skills

10. Social Awareness-Self Awareness

11. Self Direction

12. Creativity

[1]This was the original outline; additional topics, such as religious differences, death, etc , were covered in the course of the meetings.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Week	Program
5	Mr. Triangle, Mr. Circle, and Mr. Square (story) Shapes 1 (marking booklet)
6	Shapes 2 (marking booklet) Picture Reading 1: Mr. Monkey Goes to School (sentence modeling)
7	Shapes 3 (marking booklet) Shapes 4 (marking booklet) Picture Reading 2: Bobo Takes a Bath (modeling prepositional constructions)
8	Problem Solving 1: Negation 1 (marking booklet) Problem Solving 2: Negation 2 (marking booklet) Problem Solving 3: Negation 3 (marking booklet) Home Environment Language: Building a Playhouse 1 (story)
9	Numerals 1 (counting with squares) Problem Solving 4: Disjunctive Argument 1 (marking booklet) Problem Solving 5: Disjunctive Argument 2 (marking booklet) Home Environment Language: Building a Playhouse 2 (story)
10	Numerals 2: How Many? (counting parts of body) Problem Solving 6: Sequencing 1 (ordering cards) Problem Solving 7: Sequencing 2 (marking booklet) Home Environment Language: Building a Playhouse 3 (story)
11	Numerals 3: How Many and More Than (finger game) Numerals 4: How Many Fingers? (finger game) Numerals 5: Numeral Cards 1-5 Problem Solving 8: Sequencing 3 (marking booklet) Home Environment Language: Building a Playhouse 4 (story)
12	Home Environment Language 5 (marking booklet) Numerals 6: Simon Says (numeral cards, object cards) Numerals 7: Four Boys and Four Toys (counting story) Numerals 8: Numerals 1-5 (marking booklet) Shapes 5 (marking booklet)
13	Numerals 9: Five Candies (counting story) Numerals 10: Numerals 1-5 (marking booklet) Shapes 6 (marking booklet) Problem Solving 9: Disjunctive Argument 3 (marking booklet)
14	Numerals 11: Numerals 1-5 (marking booklet) Numerals 12: Numerals 1-5 (marking booklet) Letter Recognition 1. Alphabet Song (alphabet board)

33

APPENDIX B

Parent Group Meetings

1969 - 1970

12/11/69

Personnel Present: Head Teacher, Assistant Teacher, Group Leader, Child Development Supervisor, Social Worker, Group Coordinator, Parent Aides, 15 parents.

The first meeting opened with a presentation of the purpose of the study, which was to involve the parents in a decision-making role with reference to the education of their children. THe immediate reaction reflected a feeling of incompetence in this area. While only a few parents felt free to respond, those who did expressed unquestioning respect for the authority of the teacher and indicated that they didn't have the right to tell her what to do because they didn't have the education. A brief discussion of the many resources they have had to use in coping in their own lives, and in the rearing of their children from birth to school-entering age, gave them some confidence to express their views.

An immediate concern, one which is almost invariably raised at meetings with parents, was the question of discipline. All the parents wanted their children to "mind" the teacher. The majority of the parents advocated corporal punishment and expected the teacher to administer spankings when children disobeyed. The teacher pointed out that this was illegal, but that even if it weren't she did not favor this type of control. Also, many problems are settled by children among themselves through mechanisms of acceptance and approval, and many of the difficulties children have at home do not occur in the school setting.

The teacher presented the position that misbehavior is a symptom of need on the part of the child, a need which is usually aggravated by punishment. This led to a discussion of the genesis of undesirable behavior and techniques for handling it. The parents agreed readily that most acting out was a bid for attention. The leader stressed the desirability of answering this need, which was a very normal one, by approving desirable behavior, praising the child for doing something mature and constructive, rather than yelling and screaming at him when he was misbehaving. Everyone agreed that it is much easier to accept and ignore "good" behavior, and intervene and thus attend to the child only when he is doing something "bad." This type of selective attending usually results in a decrease in the desirable behavior and an increase in the undesirable behavior. The need to set aside specific periods of time, even if only 15 minutes a day, to establish a direct one-to-one relationship between parent and child was stressed.

Although the meeting generated a great deal of enthusiasm, the leader felt that unless the direction of the meetings was structured in advance, with specific topics for each meeting, they were apt to turn into simple ventilation sessions. While such meetings are of undoubted value, they would not serve the needs of the research study.

Since the Christmas holiday was coming up, no meeting was scheduled for several weeks. During this period, research assistants visited the parents and obtained responses on the Parents' Attitudes Toward Head Start (PATHS), and Parents' Expectations for Achievement of Children in Head Start (PEACH). It was decided that the direction for the next meetings would depend on the needs expressed through these protocols.

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1/6/70

Personnel Present: Head Teacher, Group Leader, Group Coordinator, Parent Aides, 9 Parents.

The questions on the PATHS were examined to provide a springboard to getting at parents' beliefs and attitudes about Head Start. Almost without exception, parents felt that Head Start was great and was doing wonderful things for their children. This was especially true of parents whose older children had gone through the program in previous years. When questions arose as to who made administrative and curricular decisions, and who should, there was a general tendency to back off. There was a feeling that they had neither the right nor the ability to take a leadership role. The only implicit criticism was expressed in item #8, which asked whether teachers did, or should, send materials home for parents to use with their children. The consensus favoring materials to take home indicated a fruitful line of procedure for future meetings.

Discussion of the items on the PEACH also added some insights into the kinds of activities parents would value. Since materials to implement cognitive development, in which parents expressed a great deal of interest, would require some time to prepare, this meeting was spent in discussing behaviors in the affective or social-emotional area. Specific topics were concerned with developing the child's sense of responsibility for his own actions (as an alternative to "telling lies"), and teaching children how to accept and express anger in socially-appropriate ways.

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1/13/70

Personnel Present: Head Teacher, Assistant Teacher, Group Leader, Group Coordinator, Parent Aides, 8 Parents.

In trying to decide what was important for children to learn in Head Start, parents at the previous meeting had indicated that they could make more valid judgments about specific learnings if they knew what the child needed to know later on, when he goes to the "big school." There was also a feeling that while they could not make a constructive

contribution to a global curriculum theory, they could talk about specific content areas. Thus the third meeting was devoted to a discussion of what specific things children need to learn in Head Start, and how to develop effective instructional procedures.

Unanimously, parents agreed that the first thing children need to learn was to pay attention, that is, to listen to and follow directions. This led to a discussion of the need for developing an interest in learning, to be responsive to children's questions so as to encourage inquiry, and to be aware of periods of readiness for new learning. The frustration one parent was having in her attempts to have her child develop sustained interest in any activity introduced some discussion on developmental stages. Perhaps the child was not ready for the demands her parent was making. It was suggested by another member of the group that many parents push children so they can boast about them, and not really out of concern for the needs of the child. Another parent suggested that the mother should ask her child to invite a friend to come home with her after Head Start class.

Again, the need to provide praise and encouragement was stressed, as well as the need to make the child feel that he is valued as a person. Returning to the question of specific curricular content, parents suggested that after children have demonstrated ability to follow directions they are ready to learn the alphabet and numbers. To develop motivation for acquiring these skills, one parent told how he used billboards, signs, and printing on boxes of cereals to make his child aware of and interested in the meaning conveyed in written symbols. The question of motivation to learn was scheduled for elaboration at the next meeting.

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1/20/70

Personnel Present: Head Teacher, Group Leader, Group Coordinator, Parent Aides, 11 Parents.

The meeting opened with the discussion of what parents expect children to learn in Head Start. One parent noted that since the children were soon to start kindergarten it would be important for them to learn the meaning of traffic signals. Giving them the responsibility for crossing streets will teach them to think for themselves, to become more aware of things about them, and to become independent. One parent reported that his child derived a great deal of pleasure from demonstrating each of his achievements in the process of attaining mastery in these areas

Another suggestion made during this meeting was that children would feel more comfortable and secure at "big school" next year if they visit the kindergarten classroom, meet the teacher, and become familiar with the route between home and school. The teacher informed the parents that visits to five schools in the area were planned as a regular part of the Head Start program. These would take place as they approached the end of the school year.

The question was raised as to whether giving children freedom to cross streets would carry over to learning how to cope with dangerous situations at home. For example, the majority of parents considered the kitchen as a potentially hazardous place because of the presence of stove, knives, scissors, etc. The teacher pointed out that by describing improper use of sharp implements, etc., parents might be putting ideas into the child's head. Also, by trying to protect the child from hurting himself he is often prevented from learning; over-protection leads to dependency, so that the child is not prepared to operate on his own at school.

In the process of teaching the child to handle tools, other academic skills can be developed. One parent recounted how her child learned to add and subtract and relate parts to a whole in the process of acquiring the motor skills involved in cutting an orange into edible segments.

The teacher raised the question of whether parents thought children should be required to sit absolutely still and listen during story time. Some parents were unaware of the fact that children can acquire even more information if they are permitted to participate actively in the learning experience. For example, if when the teacher is reading a story the child volunteers relevant information from his own background, or points to a picture and asks questions about it, this should not be discouraged. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that the child who sits quietly, apparently listening to the teacher, is actually comprehending and acquiring meaningful information.

Another topic of conversation at this meeting was how mothers feel when they have to leave their children with caretakers because they must go to work. One mother expressed guilt that she was no longer able to cope with her children's increasing demands. While unaware of the contradiction, she also expressed her hurt that her children seemed to be able to get along without her. The other members of the group suggested that it was the quality of the attention she gave her children that mattered, not the amount. They also suggested that she would have a great deal more to bring into her home from her work experiences.

In planning the logistics of the meetings, it had been decided to ask parents to bring their younger children to the meetings, rather than pay them to get baby sitters at home. This decision worked out very well. It was possible to observe parents interacting with their own children, and many parents were able to see some of the behaviors, and misbehaviors, which had been discussed. At the first few meetings, the grandmother of one of the children offered to serve as baby sitter; now the children were beginning to demonstrate the ability to operate autonomously, with only occasional recourse to their parents.

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1/27/70

Personnel Present: Head Teacher, Group Leader, Group Coordinator, Parent Aides, 11 Parents.

Emotional and interpersonal problems were still the major topics. Parents were encouraged to talk about the importance of maintaining an atmosphere of agreement and consistency in dealing with their children. The need to make an effort to show love, affection, and concern is so obvious that it is often overlooked. This basic resource, mothering, is something that cannot be supplied by the teacher, no matter how good she is with the children. If there is a secure foundation, children will be better able to handle crisis situations such as parental arguments, illness, etc.

School learning, although important, isn't the only type of input children need; they have to know how to relate to others, peers and adults, and to be honest and natural in their expression of feelings. Again the subject of letting out anger was explored; one mother provided the insight that when she tries to conceal her anger, it only builds up and comes out in another situation which may be completely unrelated to the original cause.

Many of the children in this population are involved in situations where there may be some confusion as to who is the responsible adult. In one case the child had been left with the grandmother for some time. Now the mother had returned, but the grandmother was dissatisfied with the way the mother was handling the child. Fortunately, both mother and grandmother were coming to the meetings and they were able to discuss their different viewpoints on child-rearing. One of the important points raised was the fact that neither was really considering what was happening to the child. When their attention was called to the fact that the child was becoming confused, apprehensive, and dependent, the way was opened to a more conciliatory relationship.

The mother who had complained about her child's inability to maintain attention and effort for any extended period was happy to report that she had taken the suggestion of one of the parents and invited one of her child's classmates home for an afternoon. It had been a very successful experiment since the children played together for a long time without the need for adult intervention.

At this fifth meeting, materials were ready for parents to take home. The UCLA-ECRC trained teacher, who also served as Group Coordinator, was able to demonstrate the use of the materials with several of the children who were present. Since the topic of the materials was shapes, the master teacher suggested a variety of ways the concepts could be reinforced with household objects. Several mothers contributed some original ideas.

The instructional materials were very well received and showed promise of really helping parents develop specific concepts with their children.

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2/3/70

Personnel Present: Head Teacher, Group Leader, Group Coordinator, Parent Aides, 13 Parents.

Whereas at previous meetings there was a good deal of stiffness and formality among the parents, with very little direct conversation or eye contact, there has been a gradual increase in rapport and pre-meeting socialization. At this sixth meeting it was necessary for the group leader to announce that the meeting was about to begin.

The children began to remind the parents of the meeting night; some children learned the days of the week and knew that Tuesday was the night they came to the Head Start class with their parents. They were very proud of this, and it created problems with the children whose parents were unwilling, or unable to attend. Since a few fathers were also coming, some of the boys reported that they were going to get their fathers to come too. Also, the children wanted their parents to participate in the discussions, and one child criticized his parent because she had not said anything for the entire meeting.

There were several reports of progress in interpersonal relationships at home. New questions raised related to how to explain death to a young child. This led to the question of different religious beliefs, and ended with a recognition of the need to combat prejudice and discrimination and fight for tolerance and understanding.

In going over some of the ways Head Start helped their children, the parents were unanimous in praising the excellence of the medical-dental program. Not only was the professional service good, but the teachers made a real effort to prepare children in advance as to what to expect.

The presentation of the booklet materials was again very well received. In the demonstration, the children responded readily to the questions and were enthusiastic at the prospect that they were going to have homework just like older children.

Although much progress had been made in the socialization of the parents, and all who attended were convinced of the value of the meetings, the suggestion that each parent try to bring a parent who had not yet attended created a great deal of embarrassment. After much rationalization and evasion, it turned out that these parents did not readily visit one another, and that it would be unwise to attempt to press the idea, so it was dropped. However, a mother who had been most reliable in her attendance at the meetings, and an active participant in the discussions, was asked to take over the functions of the social work aide who was not doing a very effective job of visiting the parents and getting the recalcitrant ones out to the meetings. This proved to be a very fortuitous move since with the added incentive of the modest salary she became a most ardent proselytizer for the group meetings.

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2/10/70

Meeting cancelled because of floods caused by unusually heavy rains.

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2/17/70

Personnel Present: Head Teacher, Group Leader, Group Coordinator, Parent Aides, 13 Parents.

The meeting opened with a report from both parents and children on the booklets which had been sent home the previous week. The parents told of the interest and enthusiasm with which their whole families entered into games involving finding shapes in pockets, windows, balls, slices of pie, etc. The children went to the blackboard and demonstrated the various shapes they had learned. The new lessons were presented.

One of the mothers was concerned about the fact that she was pregnant and didn't know how to explain the physiological changes which were soon to become very evident. The question was raised as to how much to tell a four-year-old child about the whole process of reproduction and birth. One mother suggested that the best answer was one which was simple and brief yet enough to satisfy the child. Many aspects of sex differences between boys and girls need to be presented in natural and wholesome ways since these children obviously become very sophisticated at an early age. This discussion somehow led to feelings about color. Most parents agreed that being of lighter color was important to them, and hence to their children. On the other hand, they noted that lighter skinned Negro children often meet with hostility from their darker skinned peers. Parents related how angry and frustrated their children felt when they learned they were not white.

A report on the experience of testers with the race identity items on the Self-Competence Test got absolutely no overt reaction from the parents. The Group Coordinator pointed out that the way children feel about themselves has an important bearing on how they feel about the color of their skin. The main thing is for the child to have a sense of his own worth. Before a child can like himself, he must know who he is, and something about the history and culture of his people. The head teacher of this class has made an important contribution by taking her children on trips to museums and libraries when appropriate exhibits were presented.

The discussion on feelings about color led to the problems of children from mixed marriages. Children from mixed cultures should be taught to feel proud of their multiple heritage; they should feel fortunate to have the opportunity to learn a second language if they are Mexican-American.

No volunteers offered to help activate all the parents; on the whole there was visibile reluctance to become personally involved.

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2/24/70

Personnel Present: Head Teacher, Group Leader, Group Coordinator, Parent Aides, 12 Parents.

The Group Coordinator talked about a research study at the University of Kansas, where the parents learned to be better teachers of their own children. The Group Leader asked the parents how they felt about the free atmosphere, where the mothers take turns working as volunteers. One parent reported that the unstructured envionment has encouraged her child to develop independence and self-reliance. Another mother was glad that this Head Start class gave her child freedom to explore and be on his own, rather than imposing rules and regimentation. The parents generally objected to the rigidity of the elementary school but felt that the freedom of the Head Start classroom would be inappropriate for older children, especially where there is a large ratio of children to teacher. It takes an especially skillful teacher to recognize and deal with each child's needs, to direct his learning without forcing him into an incompatible mold.

The experience with the instructional materials at home has given the parents a real appreciation for the value of praise and encouragement. They find that the children are modeling and internalizing the parents' expressions of approval. The parents have begun to realize, to their surprise, that they are really effective teachers.

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3/3/70

Personnel Present: Head Teacher, Group Leader, Group Coordinator, Parent Aides, 13 Parents.

At the previous week's meeting, when the selection behavior of the children on the race items of the Self-Competence scale had been broached, the parents had responded with almost complete impassivity. Evidently it had taken a little time for them to be able to bring their feelings out into the open. Now one mother admitted that her son insisted that he was white. A somewhat heated discussion followed. Many of the parents do not sympathize with the black militancy, and feel that black-white differences are being over-emphasized. They do not want their children to use skin-color as a criterion for selecting friends. (This view may be in deference to the white Group Coordinator, whom they had all grown to respect and admire.) One mother stated that she objected to being identified as part of a Black group rather than as an individual person. It was also pointed out that conditions today are very different from when they went to school; there is certainly far more integration during the years of early schooling.

In the opposition camp, some parents felt that there was insufficient emphasis on building pride in being black. The use of "Black" and

"Chicano" instead of Negro or Mexican-American was examined in terms of the building of ethnic pride. In a sense, these descriptive terms say they are proud of what they are and of their history and tradition.

Again a good part of the meeting was spent in demonstrating the use of the instructional materials. The parents were urged to go beyond the typed script, to apply the concepts to everyday experiences. In addition to increased competence with the specific ideas, this type of extension makes children more observant of the events and objects around them, makes them more attentive arouses their curiosity, aids in problem solving and in general broadens their horizons and makes it fun to learn.

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3/10/70

Personnel Present: Head Teacher, Group Leader, Group Coordinator, Parent Aides, 11 Parents.

After filling out the items on the "How I Feel," an instrument developed at ECRC for the measurement of alienation, several items of the inventory were discussed. This instrument proved to be an excellent opening wedge to get at some important feelings; in future studies of this sort it might be wise to administer the measure at an earlier meeting. (The data analysis presented in the results section of the report indicated that the responses on this test proved to be a good discriminator of the types of changes which may be expected to occur in a parent-group experience.)

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3/17/70

Personnel Present: Head Teacher, Group Leader, Group Coordinator, Parent Aides, 14 Parents.

Parents expressed concern with the imminent termination of the parent study and wanted some way to continue their meetings. During the Easter vacation the Director of ECRC contacted a community group (Project MOVE--More Opportunity Via Education) and with the Group Coordinator attended a Project MOVE meeting. The neighborhood coordinator of the project was invited to attend the next parent session.

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3/24/70

Easter Vacation. No meeting.

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4/7/70; 4/14/70; 4/21/70; 4/28/70.

Unlike the usual course of parent-group meetings, the enthusiasm and interest in the discussions and in the instructional materials continued throughout the period of the study. As a matter of fact, one more meeting than had been scheduled was convened. This last meeting served many purposes. It was in one sense a culmination and farewell; in another it was intended to overcome some of the resentment and hostility engendered in the teacher and parents of the second class at the site, which had been randomly designated as the control group. Since all the testing had been completed, this class was invited to the last meeting.

The parents of the experimental class turned out in full force (there were 16, more than at any previous meeting); the Head Start Coordinator and the Social Worker from the Delegate Agency, as well as the usual group meeting staff attended; and the Director of the Early Childhood Research Center also met with the group. And of course all the children of the experimental class parents were there; the control class parents did not feel comfortable enough to bring their children.

It was a very gratifying and successful meeting; the appreciation of the group was expressed in the tangible form of a beautiful ceramic coffee pot for the Group Cordinator, who had supplied all the meetings with snacks for the children and coffee and cake for the parents.